

12-99

Texas Agricultural Extension Service

The Texas A&M University System



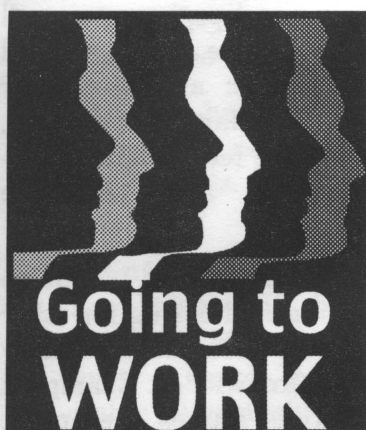
LIBRARY  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

JUL 17 2000

TEXAS STATE  
DOCUMENTS

# Changing Jobs

TEXAS STATE DEPOSITORY



**F**inding a new job or changing your career can be a real challenge. It requires much planning, patience and hard work, but it also can offer great rewards. Those who carefully make decisions and prepare well can be successful in landing a new job.

You can make your search for a new job easier if you map out a plan. The steps include:

- Research the jobs available and decide which you would like.
- If you need it, get the proper training for the job.
- Prepare an effective resume.
- Package yourself well.
- Prepare for a successful interview.
- Be on time for the interview, and be courteous, enthusiastic and honest during it.
- After the interview, send a thank-you note to the manager.

## Research job possibilities

An average person spends about 70,000 hours in a lifetime training for and working on the job. So it is important to choose very carefully how you will spend that time, which adds up to one-third of your life. If you invest a few

hours studying possible careers, you can reap many years of job satisfaction.

According to the Texas Workforce Commission, there are 29,561 separate occupations in Texas today. Recognize that there are many options. You do not want to take the first job you're offered and learn to live with it. Instead, take time to find a job that fits your values, skills, personality and interests.

There are 14 categories of job openings to consider:

1. **Industrial production** workers deal with things rather than people or ideas. They make new products. Examples: foundry, machine, print and assembly occupations.
2. **Office occupations** consist of five major areas: clerical, computing, banking, insurance and administrative occupations. Examples: cashiers, computer programmers, insurance underwriters and planners.
3. **Service occupations** involve working with other people. To be successful in these careers, a person must be sensitive and flexible and be able to communicate well. Examples: mail carriers, police officers, cosmetologists, chefs and hotel clerks.

Edited by

**Rosemarie  
Hoffman**

Assistant Professor  
and Extension Individual  
and Family Development  
Specialist, The Texas  
A&M University System

*Those who  
carefully  
make  
decisions  
and prepare  
well can be  
successful.*

4. **Educational occupations** are for those who enjoy helping others learn, explore and grow. They include teachers, counselors, school administrators, librarians, student personnel workers and Extension service staff.
5. **Sales occupations** range from department store clerks to insurance agents. A successful salesperson has drive, motivation, persistence, self confidence and an outgoing personality. Other traits include a positive outlook, knowledge of the product and an understanding of people and human nature. Examples: insurance agents, travel agents and sales representatives for car dealerships, tool companies, food companies and others.
6. **Construction** workers build our communities, dams, bridges and highways. To be a construction worker, you should be able to work well with others, participate in physical activity, solve mechanical problems and envision objects from blueprints. Examples: bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, ironworkers, operating engineers and general laborers.
7. **Transportation occupations** involve moving people or products quickly and efficiently around a community, the nation or the world. Examples: air traffic controllers, pilots, merchant marine sailors, dock workers, truck drivers and bus drivers.
8. **Scientific and technical occupations** deal with the study of the world around us. To be a good scientist, you need curiosity, patience, orderly thinking, systematic work habits and the ability to work either alone or as part of a team. Examples: chemists, geologists, biochemists, statisticians and chemical engineers.
9. **Mechanics and repairers** use their minds and hands to fix things. They work under pressure, often without supervision. They must have stamina and patience, as well as the ability to be courteous and tactful. Examples: air conditioner mechanics, airplane mechanics, computer service technicians, jewelers, locksmiths and telephone repairers.
10. **Health occupations** require understanding and caring for other people as well as technical ability and scientific knowledge. Examples: doctors, dentists, nurses, therapists, radiologists, technologists, dietitians, administrators and biological photographers.
11. **Social scientists** study our behavior to understand what makes us act the way we do. Examples: anthropologists, geographers, historians, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists.
12. **Social service** workers must be people-oriented to do their jobs well. Examples: counselors (for schools, careers, employment and rehabilitation), ministers, leisure service workers and social workers.
13. **Performing arts, design, and communication careers** involve creating and communicating ideas and emotions. Examples: dancers, singers, architects, industrial designers, advertisers and radio and television announcers.
14. **Agriculture, forestry, and fishery occupations** supply an ever-increasing population with necessary food, fiber and construction materials. Examples: farmers, farm managers, laborers, cooperative extension service staff, soil scientists, foresters and commercial anglers.

Your interests and skills are not the only considerations when you are looking for a new job or career. Consider also

whether you are willing to move and uproot your family, or take time out for training for a new career. Both decisions could make it easier to find the job you want, but they also require that you make sacrifices to reach your goal.

People who have not changed jobs for a long time may need to strengthen their job-search skills. Here are some techniques:

- **Identify what you do best.**

Employers will be interested in areas in which you excel. Maybe you have a knack for turning unprofitable livestock into profitable herds, or stubborn workers into cooperative teams. Businesses want people who can come in and attack specific problems.

- **Once you've identified your skills, spread the word.**

Let many people know you're available and seriously looking for a job.

- **Organize your job search.**

Treat it as you would a work day. Set goals to meet each day and week. Set (and keep) regular hours to look for jobs.

- **In interviews, concentrate on the firm you're applying with—not where you used to work.**

Use "I," not "we" to show that you are responsible for your accomplishments.

- **Get a business friend to put you through a mock interview** so you'll be sharper during a real session.

- **Follow up the interview with a well-written letter.**

If you don't write well, ask someone to type it for you. If you don't write a letter, make a follow-up call to show your interest.

The higher up the career ladder you are, the longer it will take to find a similar position. Executives, managers and corporate-level employees often take more than a year to find another job.

People who have quit their jobs or have been fired or laid off need to take other steps during the job search:

- **Get your financial house in order.**

A rule of thumb in job searches is that it takes one month of hunting for each \$10,000 of salary desired. If you have lost a job, you may be without a paycheck for several months. Talk to your creditors, particularly your mortgage lender. You may be able to negotiate smaller payments or a grace period until you find a job.

- **Accept unemployment insurance.**

You have earned it.

- **Borrow money to keep your home, car, furniture and other assets.**

Once you sell assets, you'll probably never replace them.

- **Keep your insurance paid up,**

particularly health insurance.

- **Talk to your family about the reduced financial state** that concerns each family member.

- **Postpone expensive vacations** (even if it would relieve stress).

- **Reduce your living costs.**

## Your resume

Once you have decided on a career direction and prepared yourself for it, you need to develop an effective resume. A resume is an integral part of a job search campaign. It should be attractive, easy to read and to the point.

Write your resume to highlight your accomplishments, not your job titles. It should create an interest in you, describe your skills and accomplishments, and encourage the manager to hire you.

*Let many people know that you're seriously looking for a job.*

*Make  
sure your  
resume looks  
professional;  
do not pencil  
in changes.*

Most employers use resumes to screen job candidates. An effective resume can make the employer want **you** to fill that position.

Your resume should include phone numbers where you can be contacted during the workday and at home, your job objectives or career goals, your educational activities, a summary of your work history (paid, volunteer, full-time and part-time), honors, memberships or hobbies that support the job you're seeking, and three references. Make sure the references know that they will be asked to provide this information.

You may write a letter to accompany the resume, or to take to interviews or to hand to employers at job fairs, conventions, union halls and other job-related gatherings.

**Resume pointers.** Be as brief as possible (one or two pages) so that a manager can easily scan it. Choose only the information that applies to the specific job you're seeking. Condense it so the manager can group your history easily. Wait until the interview to elaborate on details.

Use your resume to make a positive statement about yourself. Always put the most important things first. Omit any negative reasons for leaving earlier jobs, as well as information such as your age, marital status, health or unnecessary hobbies. Do not discuss your salary requirements or current salary until you've been offered the job.

Because your skills can change quickly, write a fresh resume for each job you're trying to get. Emphasize relevant experiences and minimize or eliminate other background information. A resume does not need to report everything you have done.

Make sure that your resume looks professional. Have it printed in clear, sharp type on high-quality paper. **Do not pencil in changes.** Proofread it so that errors won't hurt you.

If you have no work experience, write your resume to highlight your managerial and organizational skills for volunteer groups or in family business.

A resume is not a substitute for a personal interview. It can, however, be a first step toward getting the interview. Here is the kind of information you will need to include:

## **Resume**

### **Personal data**

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number: Day  
Night

### **Work history**

List each job separately, starting with the most recent one and working backward. For each job, list:

- Dates of employment
- Name and address of the employer and nature of the business
- Position you held
- A brief description of specific job duties.

### **Education**

- High school, college and other courses or training
- Dates of graduation or leaving school
- Degrees or certificates received
- Major and minor subjects and other courses related to your job goal
- Extracurricular activities

### **Special skills**

Focus on your skills that are related to the job you are seeking.

- Typing, computer, or ability to operate special equipment
- Volunteer or leisure time activities
- Knowledge of foreign languages



## References

Obtain permission from three people to use as references (such as teachers, supervisors or other businesspeople). List each one's:

- Name
- Position
- Address
- Phone number

## Before the interview: Package yourself

After you have prepared and sent your resume to a prospective employer, you need to prepare for a job interview.

**Package yourself.** Applying for a job is like giving someone a gift—you are both the presenter and the gift. Your goal during the interview is to get the employer to open “the gift” and see what you have to offer.

You need to have five essential elements to go into an interview: credentials, correct speech, appropriate dress, good personal hygiene and a positive attitude.

**Credentials:** Your credentials are those things that can be written on your resume—the skills, training and experience that give you credibility and show that you can do the job. There are three kinds of credentials:

**Personal credentials** include recommendations from current or former employers, current or former teachers, friends, and others who can support you in this job application.

**Academic credentials** include diplomas or certificates showing your preparation for the job.

**Occupational credentials** include work experiences that have developed skills needed for the job you're seeking.

For some jobs, you do not need a resume. Instead, you can prepare a personal data sheet to list important information that employers need. Below is the information you might include on a personal data sheet.

## Personal Data Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_

Night \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Schools Attended:

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Date graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

## References:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Job Experience:

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates held: \_\_\_\_\_

**Speech:** The way you speak is at least as important in your job search as any other single factor. You can get by with sloppy English only in careers in which you don't deal with people. Use good grammar. Keep your tone of voice pleasant. Avoid profanity or expressions that may offend others. Speech is one of the first personal attributes any potential employer notices. Don't let it be the last.

**Dress:** First impressions are important, and your clothing is usually the first thing that someone notices about you. Research shows that applicants who are appropriately dressed and well-groomed receive 8 to 20 percent higher starting salaries than those who look less neat.

Clothing and appearance are important in the work world. Although there is no universal “right way” to dress, each particular occupation, season of the year and location has an appropriate attire.

*In the interview, keep your tone of voice pleasant.*

*Clothing and appearance are important in the work world.*

Your clothing should show good taste. It should not be overdone or distract the interviewer. Conservative styles and subdued colors usually make a positive impression.

When evaluating potential employees, most supervisors interpret neatness as evidence of skills. If you're unsure about appropriate appearance, read some professional magazines or books on dressing for success. Don't let your wardrobe hold you back from the job you want.

**Personal hygiene.** Poor personal hygiene may not be noticed as quickly as inappropriate clothing or speech, but it will certainly leave the strongest impression. Sloppy habits can sabotage your chances at a job, whether it's related to clothing, hair, body or teeth.

You must be clean and well-groomed to make a good impression. Even though skin and weight problems are usually related to health, people perceived as hygiene problems, which can diminish your chances of being hired.

**Attitude.** Your attitude during an interview will give an indication as to whether you will work well as a member of a team. A manager will test your attitude in the interview as well as the way you react to questions. Every boss wants workers who have enthusiasm and positive thoughts about themselves and others.

## **The interview**

The interview is an important event in job hunting. The 20 to 30 minutes you spend with an interviewer may determine whether or not you get the job. A little preparation can greatly increase your chances of success.

**Time and place.** Write down the exact time and location of your interview as well as the full name and address of the company. Make no assumptions. You will also need to know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it.

**Be on time.** Arrive about 10 minutes early for an interview. Being late for an interview gets you off to a bad start and is inexcusable.

**Know about the job.** Learn all you can about the company beforehand—what it does, makes or sells. Find out where its plants, offices or stores are located.

During the interview, show some interest in the company and ask intelligent questions about its operations. Know what kind of job you want and why you qualify to work for this particular firm.

## **What to take to an interview**

- Social Security card
- A work permit, if required
- A typed resume
- A typed list of personal references, complete with addresses and phone numbers, if you do not have a resume
- A pen and small notebook to fit in pocket or purse

## **What NOT to take to an interview**

- Chewing gum or tobacco (any form)
- Shopping bags or parcels
- Friends or relatives (unless requested by the employer)
- Music or entertainment items.

## **Tips for the interview**

- If your palms are sweaty, wipe them before going into the interview.
- Greet the interviewer by name as you enter. Shake hands only if the interviewer makes the first gesture.
- Wait to be seated until you are offered a chair.
- Don't smoke, dip or chew tobacco, even if you're invited to.

- Some nervousness is expected, but try to relax.
- Before you go into the interview, be prepared for at least one surprise question, such as "What can I do for you?" "Tell me about yourself," or "Why are you interested in this job/company?"
- Be informative without being boastful, but don't undersell yourself.
- Interviews are usually simple question-and-answer sessions. Answer calmly, intelligently and honestly. A straightforward answer is best. Don't hesitate to ask the interviewer to clarify a question you do not understand.
- Interviewers like to do most of the talking. When you think you've talked too much, give the floor back to the manager by saying, "Perhaps you have questions to ask me."
- Be positive. Don't criticize other bosses or companies, and do not vent your personal problems.
- Don't let your discouragement show if you think the interview isn't going well.
- If salary is discussed early in the interview, politely pass the question by saying that you are more interested in the job than the money. If the interviewer insists on discussing salary, give a wide range. Negotiate your salary after a job is offered.
- Jobs are seldom offered at interviews. If you are offered the job and want it, merely say, "Yes." If you're not sure, ask for time to think it over.
- Most interviews last about 30 minutes. Watch for an indication that the interview is over. Sum up your interest briefly. State that you think you are qualified for the job and find out what the next step is. Thank the interviewer and leave.

## **Tips for successful interviewing**

### **Do**

- Act naturally.
- Be prompt, neat and courteous.
- Carry out promises to return requested information, forms or other credentials.
- Ask relevant questions.
- Allow the employer's view to be expressed.
- Read company literature.
- Make yourself understood.
- Listen to the other person to determine the skills wanted.
- Present informative credentials.
- Think of your potential service to the employer.

### **Don't**

- Criticize yourself or former employers.
- Be late for the interview.
- Freeze or become tense.
- Present an extreme appearance.
- Become impatient.
- Become emotional.
- Talk too much or too little.
- Oversell yourself.
- Draw out the interview.
- Make elaborate promises.
- Arrive unprepared.
- Try to be funny.
- Unduly emphasize the starting salary.
- Linger over fringe benefits.

### **Interview questions you may be asked**

- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want to work for our company?

*Don't smoke, dip or chew tobacco, even if you're invited to during the interview.*

*Don't  
oversell  
yourself.*

- What was your best subject in school? Your worst? Your favorite?
- What extracurricular offices or volunteer positions do you hold?
- What kind of contribution can you make to our company?
- Do you like to work with others or by yourself?
- Why are you leaving your present employer?
- What do you think of your present management?
- How much money do you expect to earn 5 years from now? Ten?
- What would you do if you did not agree with some instructions you were given?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- What interests you about our product or company?

**Question they shouldn't ask you  
(but sometimes do)**

1. What is the lowest salary you will accept?
2. How old are you?

3. Are you married?
4. Do you have any children? How many?
5. Were you ever arrested and what for? (An applicant can be questioned about convictions, but not arrests).
6. Have you ever used drugs?
7. Can you work Saturdays and Sundays?
8. Have your wages ever been garnished? (Wages can't be garnished in Texas except for child support and IRS.)

After the interview is over, send a thank-you note to the interviewer. In the letter, show that you are enthusiastic about the job, but don't reflect any anxiety about getting it. Follow-up letters make a good impression and can make you stand out from the crowd of applicants.

Finding a new job or charting a different course for your career can be difficult. But with patience, preparation and perseverance, you can make your job search a success.

---

This publication was developed from work originally done by Dorthy Taylor, former Extension Family Life Specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

Grant funds from The Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University support the development of this publication.

---

Produced by Agricultural Communications, The Texas A&M University System  
Extension publications can be found on the Web at: <http://agpublications.tamu.edu>

*Educational programs of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin.*

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Chester P. Fehlis, Deputy Director, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System.

5,000 copies, Revision

FLE